DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 146 674 EA 010 077

AUTHOR Kendell, Richard; Byrne, David R.
TITLE Thinking About the Greenfield-Griffiths Debate.
INSTITUTION University Council for Educational Administration, Columbus, Ohio.
PUB DATE Oct 77
NOTE 12p.
JOURNAL CIT UCEA Review; v19 n1 pp6-16 Oct 1977

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Administration; Educational Research; Elementary Secondary Education; Literature Reviews; *Models; *Organizational Theories; Post Secondary Education; Theories

ABSTRACT

The continuing debate between Daniel Griffiths and T. Barr Greenfield over the respective merits of the "theory-based movement" or "positivist" view of educational administration and the "phenomenological" view that organizational theories should properly consist of "multifaceted images of organizations" has become more a political debate than an academic one. The Greenfield-Griffiths debate is an example of rigid polarizing that obscures efforts to know or understand. This particular debate between positivists and phenomenologists illustrates a general condition in the field of educational administration--the political challenge to the "disciplined elite's" definition of what constitutes legitimate work in the field. A parallel example is the dispute between advocates of the theory-based movement and those who support field-based research and development efforts. There is a definite need for a more relativist attitude toward knowledge, theory, science, and research. The field of educational administration must foster and sanction modes of inquiry that exceed the limitations of positivism. (Author/JG)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED146674

Thinking About the Greenfield–Griffiths Debate

by
Richard Kendell and David R. Byrne
University of Utah

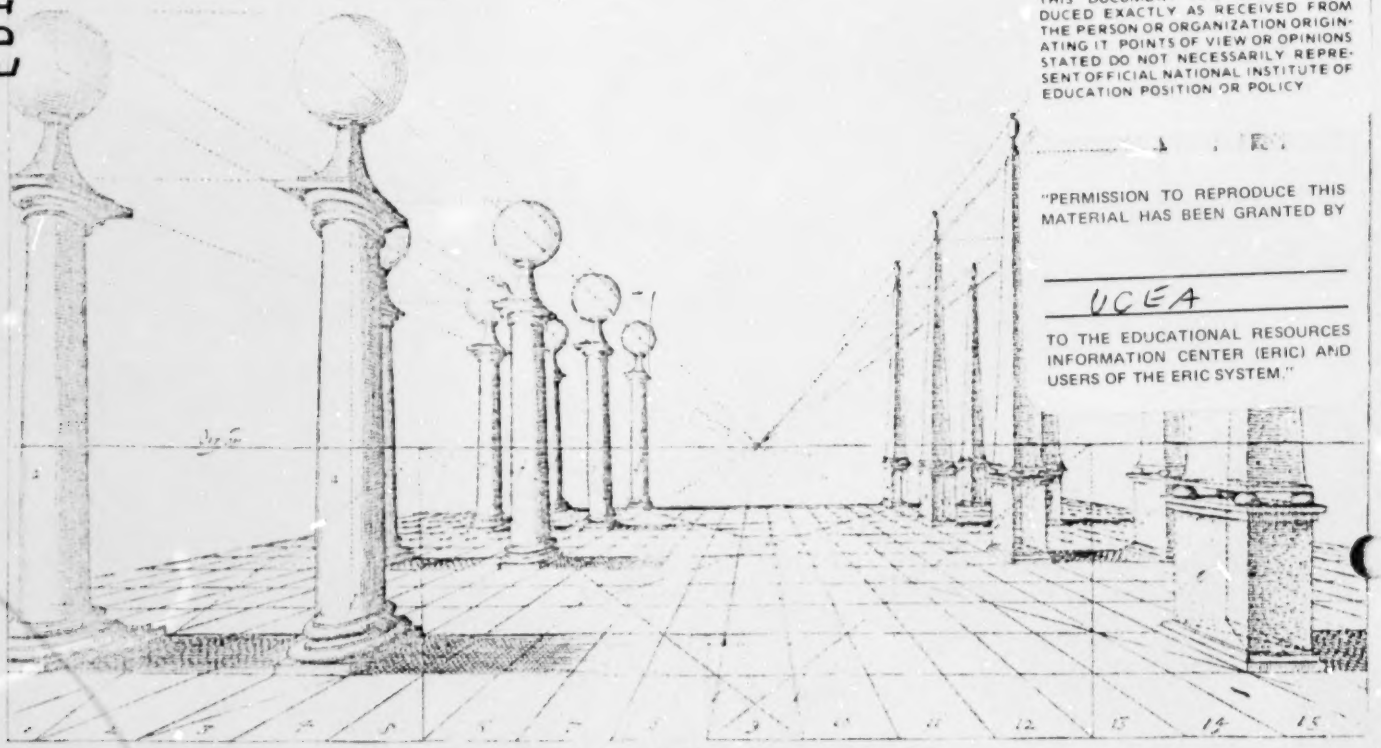
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

UCEA

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."



The continuing disagreement of T. Barr Greenfield, Daniel Griffiths, and others, much of which has been carried in these pages, is beginning to resemble an extended political campaign.

Greenfield, the challenger, marks the failures of the "theory based movement" and calls for its rejection in favor of "phenomenology." Griffiths, the seasoned establishment man, defends the "movement" as victimized by social vagaries and unscrupulous entrepreneurs. He patronizes and chides the challenger for misguided naivete. Both participants make a point of intellectual disdain for the view held by the other. Such behavior is understandable when the nature of the debate is political, but such exchanges offer little academically. Byrne (1976) has suggested that the field would be considerably helped by distinguishing when the nature of a debate is academic and when it is political.

> At the political level the intent of argumentation is to persuade the field that a particular point of view should hold sway in establishing the "norms and criteria of scholarship for the field." Winning at this level promises rewards for the victorious. Among the political prizes the following seem obvious: control of publication and publishing opportunities, leadership in the policy making bodies and associations, access to the resources necessary for research and scholarly

EA 010 077

Richard Kendell is Associate Dean of the Graduate School and Assistant Professor of Educational Administration at the University of Utah.

David R. Byrne is Asst. Professor of Educational Administration and Assistant Dean of the Graduate School of Educational, University of Utah.

> work, and the prestige and status incumbent to acknowledged leadership in a professional field. The high attractiveness of such rewards, in part, explains the intensity of the debate.[1]

1. Byrne, David R. "Toward Clarification of the Competency-Based Issue," **CCBC Note book**, No. 3, Vol. 5, May 1976, pp. 2-5.

It seems fair to characterize some elements of the Greenfield-Griffiths discussion as intense in the political sense. To the extent that such a conclusion can be reached certain choices must be made by the field. Should the "cause célèbre of a disciplined elite" and their students continue to dominate decisions on the legitimacy of research and scholarship? If not, should the field adopt phenomenology as the new ruling view? If so, shall the phenomenologists be cast in the role of speculators and dreamers? The problem with such choices is that they must be made on the basis of either/or propositions. This is the nature of political decisions.

Granted that similar debates and similar choices have occurred in other academic territories and granting that such debates, because of the intense commitment to a certain world-view held by the participants, cannot be fully apolitical, is the field of Educational Administration ready to make such a choice? We think not. In fact, it is our judgment that the political aura of the current debate poorly serves the field. A year ago, Ray Rist of the National Institute of Education pointed out the undesirability of such political polarization.

> "Hard vs. soft." "Quantifiers vs. describers." "Scientists vs. critics." "Rigor vs. intuition." It is merely a restating of the obvious to suggest that the dichotomies such as are represented by these trite clichés have too long dominated comparative discussions of varying research strategies in education. The complexities and nuances of research approaches are reduced to simple and rigid polarities. Thus the emergence of methodological provincialism reflected in the reification of the terms "qualitative methodology" and "quantitative methodology." The dialectic and interaction among all efforts to "know" or to "understand" are obscured. Further, we only hinder and cripple ourselves by a continued fixation upon what is "good" about one approach or "bad" about another.[2]

2. Rist, Ray C. **On The Relations Among Educational Research Paradigms: From Disdain to Detente.** Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development in cooperation with National Institute of Education and Council on Anthropology and Education, July 1976, p. 1.

It is our thesis that the Greenfield-Griffiths debate stands as an examplar of such rigid polarizing and does obscure efforts to know or understand. Further, we would argue that the field of Educational Administration needs to engage in what Rist calls "detente" or "peaceful co-existence".

It would seem immensely useful if we considered new ideas for what they may offer rather than destroy them for not complying with other ideas. It would be equally helpful if more established views could be critiqued for what they have done and can continue to do rather than castigating them for not accomplishing what they never pretended to accomplish. We offer this argument fully cognizant that many in the field desire an organizing paradigm so that "normal science" can proceed in the Kuhnian sense. The lack of epistemological clarity in the field suggests two possible reasons that choosing a "paradigm" would be unwise. First, we do not know enough, and second, it would be capricious to assume that our field of study approximates those fields which Kuhn analyzes with his model. Our past history of making intuitive leaps for the sake of establishing "scientific" respectability have left us lacking rationales for using one conception of science as opposed to others.

In that context, we discuss in the following comments how Greenfield and Griffiths do what Kuhn has called "talking through each other".[3] We then turn to a discussion of how the research and development school of thought may be added to the current discussion. We conclude by making some general recommendations of grounds on which a continuing discussion may be profitable.

3. Kuhn, Thomas S. **The Structure of Scientific Revolutions**, University of Chicago Press: Chicago, Illinois, 1974, p. 109.

The Old Guard

For better or worse Educational Administration lives with the so-called "theory based movement". Beginning in the '50's this movement "emphasized

hypothetico-deductive research rooted in theory and based in the concept of the educational institution as a social system."[4] The *Conference Report,* published in the October, 1975, *Review* notes that those who had been leaders in this movement recognized that the underlying momentum had been lost. Further, they contended that the movement never encompassed the field but was the "cause célèbre of a disciplined elite mainly quartered in the University of Chicago."[5] Let us assume both of these conclusions are correct. That does not deny the effect the movement had on the field's conception of knowledge. It does not deny the impact on literature and instruction in Educational Administration. And it does not deny the impact on meaning we give to such concepts as science, research, and theory. This is in part Greenfield's problem: He wants to use concepts with other meanings — meanings which differ from what Griffiths says they should be.

This disagreement, though perhaps new to Educational Administration, has long historical roots, particularly in Europe. American science essentially grows out of one school of thought in that earlier discussion, positivism. Although we do not frequently talk about positivism any longer, a strong case may be made that the "theory based movement" in Educational Administration bases its judgments on a positivist view of knowledge. Consider the brief summary of positivist thinking taken from *The Great Ideas* discussion on "Science."

> All its current varieties have this much in common: the identification of science with knowledge of fact, and further, the restriction of such knowledge to conclusions obtained and verified empirically. Whatever does not comply with this conception of science is either, like mathematics or logic, a purely formal discipline or, like philosophy and religion, it is conjecture, opinion, or belief — personal, subjective, even wishful.[6]

The positivist view is clearly reflected in many of Griffith's comments. He argues that Greenfield "rejects theory as a scientific concept and used it as a highly personal construct. In fact, Greenfield is saying there can be no theory, as the word is understood by physical or social scientists, and this is demonstrated when he urges preparation programs to be based on the study of schools, one by one."[7] This criticism of course simply reflects Griffith's view of what science and theory mean, and from the positivist perspective his criticism is quite correct.

In his essay in the October 1975 *Review*, Griffiths makes the following recommendation:

> I would suggest that the Feigl definition that was generally accepted 15 years ago be reinstated and that only work which approximates this definition be acceptable as theoretical.[8]

For purposes of understanding the Greenfield-Griffiths conflict the brief statement below of Feigl's definition of theory is provided.

> In order to provide for a terminology which will not constantly involve us in a tangle of confusion, I propose to define a "theory" as a set of assumptions from which can be derived by purely logico-mathematical procedures a larger set of empirical laws. The theory thereby furnishes an explanation of these empirical laws and unifies the originally relatively heterogenous areas of subject matter characterized by those empirical laws.[9]

Kimbrough and Nunnery make clear the narrow and rigid nature of this definition ". . In terms of this definition, the use of the term *theory* should be restricted to a set of assumptions from which empirical laws can be derived."[10] If for Griffiths this definition represents what theory must be, then it is not without reason that he rejects Greenfield's use of the term as naive. To what extent these reasons are or would be good for the field of Educational Administration is one of the questions

4. Hart, Deborah. "Conference Report," **UCEA Review**, Vol. XVII, No. 1, October 1975, p.3.

5. Ibid, p. 3.

6. Hutchins, Robert M., editor, "Science," **The Great Ideas: A Syntopicon Encyclopedia Britannica:** Chicago, 1971, pp. 682-683.

7. Griffiths, Daniel E. "Forum," **UCEA Review**, Vol. XVII, No. 1, September 1976, p. 11.

8. Griffiths, Daniel E. "Some Thoughts About Theory in Educational Administration — 1975," **UCEA Review**, Vol. XVII, No. 1, October 1975, p. 15.

9. Feigl, Herbert. "Principles and Problems of Theory Construction in Psychology," in Wayne Dennis (ed.), Current Trends in Psychological Theory, (Pittsburgh: U. of Pittsburgh, 1951), p. 181. — Cited in Kimbrough & Nunnery, **Education Administration — An Introduction**, p. 47.

10. Kimbrough, Ralph B. and Nunnery, Michael Y. **Educational Administration — An Introduction**, MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc.: New York, 1976, p. 47.

we hope might be addressed in a continued search for clarity on knowledge issues.

Daniel Griffiths certainly does not stand alone as a positivist. As we noted earlier, positivism has been the major organizing principle of the serious scholarship identified with the "theory based movement." The writing of Patrick Suppes of Stanford University seems nearly parallel to Griffiths' criticism of Greenfield. Consider the following:

> The newest version of the naive problem-solving viewpoint is to be found in the romantics running from John Holt to Charles Silberman, who seem to think that simply by using our natural intuition and by observing what goes on in classrooms we can put together all the ingredients needed to solve our educational problems. To a large extent these new romantics are the proper heirs of Dewey, and they suffer from the same intellectual weakness — the absence of the felt need for theoretically based techniques of analysis.[11]

11. Suppes,Patrick. "The Place of Theory in Educational Research," **Educational Researcher**, Vol. 3, no. 6, June 1974, p. 6.

Although one might seriously question placing Dewey in league with Silberman and Holt, that is a matter beyond the intent of this paper. One has a feeling that Suppes like Griffiths has a definite sense of what useful knowledge is — it is knowledge rooted in theory and empirically validated. We believe Suppes would cast Greenfield in with the romantics and for the same reasons as Griffiths. The rigor with which this view is held by Suppes is reflected in the following:

> It is often thought and said that what we most need in education is wisdom and broad understanding of the issues that confront us. Not at all, I say. What we need are deeply structured theories in education that drastically reduce, if not eliminate, the need for wisdom. I do not want wise men to design or build the airplane I fly in, but rather technical men who understand the theory of aerodynamics and the structural properties of metal.
>
> And so it is with education. Wisdom we need, I will admit, but good theories we need even more. I want to see a new generation of trained theorists and an equally competent band of experimentalists to surround them, and I look for the day when they will show that the theories I now cherish were merely humble way stations on the road to the theoretical palaces they have constructed.[12]

12. Ibid, p. 9.

Clearly, this position which separates wisdom from theory represents the positivist position. Presumably the trained theorists armed with bands of trained experimentalists will, through science (as defined), produce true knowledge of education. One does not need great imagination to draw a scenario of how Greenfield's claims for *verstehen* and phenomenology would be received in this camp.

This brief discussion of critical points made against the Greenfield position may serve to illuminate certain aspects of the nature of the current debate, that is, as representative of a classic critical confrontation between those who hold a positivistic view of knowledge and those who criticize that view as too narrow and restrictive. Raymond Williams, in a brief historical essay on positivism, presents the traditional arguments used in challenging the merit of the positivist view.

> It is significant that it (positivism) is not used, as are both scientific and empirical, to describe and justify a criterion of reliable knowledge. Rather, it is mainly used by opponents of this criterion as absolute. What they urge against it is not what positivists themselves argued against, whether faith or a priori ideas. Instead, the critique of positivism is based on what is felt to be the ambiguity of the concept of 'observable

> facts,' in its common limitation to facts subject to physical measurement, or repeatable and verifiable measurement. It is argued not only this neglects the position of the observer, who is also a fact and not merely an instrument, but that it neglects experiences and questions which are not 'measurable' in this way; this would then limit THEORY and SCIENTIFIC method to certain areas, exposing other areas to mere convention or indifference.[13]

13. Williams, Raymond. **'Keywords — A Vocabulary of Culture and Society**, William Collins Sons and Co. Ltd.: Glasgow, 1976, pp. 200-201.

Williams goes on to note that few people use the word positivist any longer and that in many circles the word "scientific" has taken on the same meaning. We believe this has been the case with the "theory based movement." There is a sense, in his initial comments, that Greenfield's attack falls into this traditional stream of criticism. This would, we believe, be a profitable issue for debate; however, it seems to become lost in his advocacy for phenomenology.

The Challenge

There are both strengths and weaknesses in the Greenfield position. On the one hand Greenfield is quite justified in asserting that existing theories of administration are inadequate — that is, they have been assumed to represent laws of human behavior that in fact are incomplete and often inaccurate. Such theories have been relatively narrow in their consideration of variables and have made a claim of universality only at the expense of ignoring other important factors with a material bearing on the functioning of organizations, i.e., "the nature, interests, and values of those who are instrumental in maintaining organizations."[14] In short, human behavior and the functioning of organizations are vastly more complicated than our statistical descriptions and/or predictions may indicate.

14. Mayntz, Renate. 'The Study of Organizations," **Current Sociology**, Vol. No. 3, pp. 113-114 (as quoted in Greenfield, T. Barr, "Theory About What?").

Greenfield also makes a good case that the theory based movement has dominated the field of educational administration and has imposed a view of theory and research that not only has not been highly productive in terms of interpreting and explaining the phenomena of administration but also may well have ill served the field by insisting on a theoretical and research mode without a sound basis for training administrators or for dealing with practical educational questions. Greenfield's notion that certain beliefs and ideologies come to prevail in an organization, even though these dominating views may not be "necessary," "efficient," "satisfying," or even "functional"[15] finds no better example than in the theory based movement. This is not to suggest that there is anything fundamentally wrong with the development of theories and with the generation of propositions that can be rigorously tested. The point is that many of the important questions and issues concerning the practice of educational administration, as well as the training programs related to that practice, are not exhausted by the knowledge derived from empirically based research. This point leads to several weaknesses in the Greenfield position.

15. Greenfield, T. Barr. "Theory About What? " **UCEA Review**, Vol. XVII, No. 2, February 1976, pp.6-7.

To begin with, Greenfield does not make proper allowance for the positive contributions of empirically based research. He argues that organizational theories should properly consist of "multi-faceted images of organizations"[16] but disallows the possibility that one of those images may be grounded in positivist assumptions. In a sense, Greenfield advocates the replacement of one grand ideology for another. The philosophical underpinnings of the positivist position and the methodological requirements in doing empirically based research make certain demands on the kinds of questions that can be asked: Some propositions are meaningful and subject to confirmation, and others are not. Such requirements limit the range of legitimate inquiry, but this condition does not mean that there is no place in the theoretical enterprise for generating and testing lawlike propositions about organizations.

16. Ibid, p. 7.

The more serious charge against the Greenfield position is that he has shown neither what phenomenology is nor its utility in the study of organizations. If there is a body of theory and assumptions that runs squarely at odds with the current ideological underpinnings of educational administration (presumably this can be interpreted to mean the "natural systems" view)[17], Greenfield has failed to show — in many instances — just what those distinctions are. Greenfield makes the point that organizations are properly seen as inventions of social reality, a view based on the assumptions that there are no fixed ways of constraining the world around us and that direct access to external reality is not possible. He seems to overlook the

17. Greenfield, T. Barr. "Theory in the Study of Organizationa and Administrative Structures: A New Perspective," Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Intervisitation Programme on Educational Administration, July 1974.

fact that "natural system" interpretations of organizations are every bit as invented as phenomenological conceptions of reality. Natural systems theories are not manifestations of an inherent and inevitable structure but simply approximations of what that external reality might look like. The point that this structure cannot be dealt with directly and only as a consequence of interpreting and decoding raw data received by our senses is not a problem unique to the natural systems view but is true of all forms of inquiry.

Greenfield, likewise, does not draw an important distinction between the natural systems and the phenomenological perspectives in his characterization of research (from the phenomenological view) as "the search for meaningful relationships and the discovery of their consequences for action." Is this account fundamentally different from his assessment of the natural systems approach which aims to discover the laws of society and human conduct and to identify conditions or relationships which permit the collectivity to exist? While Greenfield makes a good case in suggesting that human behavior in an organizational setting is more complicated and less predictable than our current theories allow, the phenomenological view does not deny the existence of relationships that can be discovered, analyzed and ostensibly used to increase our understanding of organizations in general. In effect, we see in the phenomenological perspective, as Greenfield describes it, many of the elements of description, control, and prediction commonly aligned with the natural systems view and its positivistic underpinnings.

On the one hand Greenfield argues that organizational theories should properly consist of "multi-faceted images or organizations as varied as the cultures which support them." On the other hand he allows for the importance of critical analysis, interpretation, the search for meaningful relationships and the discovery of their consequences for action. The search for relationships and the need for critical analysis seems out of joint with the proposition that every organization is *sui generis*. This interpretation of phenomenology seems to resemble the natural systems view of research in many respects and in effect becomes a contradiction of many of its own premises.

There is further evidence of the lack of clarity and valid distinctions in Greenfield's discussion of organizations as order maintaining devices. He does not make a clear distinction between the phenomenological and systems views with respect to the problem of order in social organizations. He states for example:

> . . . in the phenomenological view, the organization as an entity striving to achieve a single goal or set of goals is resolved into meaningful actions of individuals . . . Thus the notion of the organization as a necessary order-maintaining instrument falls (sic) and the notion of organization as the expression or particular human ideologies takes its place. In this way, the problem or order becomes the problem of control. Or to put the question otherwise, the problem is not how order shall be maintained but rather who maintains it, how, and with what consequences. [18]

18. Ibid.

Quite apart from the ambiguity of explaining how organizations can be "resolved into the meaningful actions of individuals," Greenfield simply does not show that the system view of order and the phenomenological view of control are conceptually unrelated. Moreover the problem of control and its relationship to "the notion of organization as the expression of human ideologies" is less clear than the meaning of order in organizations conceived as "order maintaining instruments." Are we to assume that organizations from the phenomenological perspective make no allowance for dealing with questions of order, or is the point that order is more the result of interaction than structure?

This analysis could be extended but perhaps the point is made that the phenomenological perspective has not emerged through the Greenfield critique as an approach that is well defined or defended. The point could be made that the distinctions made between the systems view and the phenomenological view rest in part on a misunderstanding of the former and an inadequate explanation of the latter.

A More Basic Issue

To this point our discussion has focused on the nature of the Greenfield-Griffiths debate. Our major theme has been that the debate should be understood as both political and academic. We have suggested that, in a political sense, Greenfield's arguments represent a challenge to the domination of the norms and criteria for legitimate research and scholarship in the field by "theory-based" advocates. In an academic sense, we have argued that the debaters have engaged in "talking through each other" using different "sets of meanings" for concepts such as science, theory, and knowledge.

It seems to us that this particular debate, positivists versus phenomenologists, illustrates a general condition in the field of Educational Administration — that is, the political challenge to the "disciplined elites"' definition of what constitutes legitimate work in the field is not isolated in the phenomenologist camp. Criticisms of the narrowness, inappropriateness, and non-productivity of a "theory-based" view as well as proposals for divergent "sets of meanings" for directing research and scholarship in the field have been abundant in our literature over the past few years. It is our judgment that in most cases these challenges have both political and academic dimensions. We believe that the challenge currently being offered by people whose work might be organized under the rubric of research and development illustrates the disenchantment and dissatisfaction with the "theory based" paradigm in various segments of our field. In the following paragraphs we discuss R&D versus "theory-based" as a parallel exemplar which has both political and academic elements. We conclude this discussion with a suggestion that the debates which have been analyzed in this paper should focus the field's attention on a more basic issue than choosing between the ideas offered by the various proponents.

In February of 1976, Lloyd McCleary argued that the "theory based movement" has inhibited necessary development and created a condition of "somnambulance" in the field. McCleary would like to include R & D, particularly Competency-Based Education, into that group identified as "sloganized specialties" in the Conference Report. He argues his case on three points: 1) the rejection of "theory based" research by funding agencies; 2) the failure of the movement to transform the profession; and 3) the inappropriateness of classical research modes for solving practical educational questions. A strong case can be made for the validity of each point. He also reviews the arguments of his political opponents. They explain the stalling of the "theory based movement" as a result of: 1) the capricious nature of the national economy, 2) the prostitution of academic principles for the price of federal funding dollars, and 3) the imposition of the publish or perish mentality upon educational scholars and researchers. If one closes his/her eyes and listens, the full campaign spirit of the rhetoric comes through, with the incumbents denying responsibility for the consequences of their actions and the challengers mounting their criticism on the past record and claiming new programs to rectify the situation.

At the height of their political influence in the field, the "disciplined elite" regularly dismissed R & D efforts as the purview of intellectual hacks. In the current situation, with the legitimacy of that influence being challenged on several fronts, R & D people may experience a special sense of justice in observing the defensive attitudes and disclaimers of seduction manifested by proponents of the "theory based movement". If this political exchange results in a substantial reduction in the influence of the "disciplined elite," it would, in our judgment, be unwise to interpret this outcome as an academic rejection of the positivist view or as a signal for the field to discard theoretical work as useless. We suggest that a clear distinction be made between the viability and utility a particular view offers the field and the behavior of those who have advocated that view.

We all know of the current fashion of citing Thomas Kuhn and of using his explanation of the conduct of science to clarify discussion in our field. Jerome Popp's[19] efforts along this line seem particularly useful. The brief discussion which follows may illustrate how analytic distinctions made by Popp can mitigate at least part of the presumed polarity between R & D work and "theory based" work. (Many of the statements which follow were previously made in the article by Byrne noted earlier.)

Popp builds upon the work of Cronbach and Suppes, particularly their distinction between "decision oriented inquiry" and "conclusion oriented inquiry." He

19. Popp, Jerome A. "Paradigms i Educational Inquiry," **Educ tional Theory**, Vol. 25, No. Winter 1975, pp. 28-39.

suggests that we consider two types of inquiry that occur in education: 1) practical educational inquiry, and 2) epistemic educational inquiry. The method chosen is determined (and constrained) by the nature of the research question being asked. Epistemic inquiry follows from questions which can be answered as true or false on the verification of empirical evidence. Practical educational inquiry follows from questions which ask for a prescription for practice — what should be done? The following statement from Popp makes the distinction quite clear.

> A school principal whose conclusions continually produced new and wider practical problems would be condemned as imcompetent while his (her) scientific counterpart would be heralded. Successful practical educational inquiry produces fewer problems thereby making further practical inquiry less and less necessary. Practical inquiry aims at the closing out of practical inquiry in any particular context, whereas epistemic inquiry seeks wider horizons in which to operate.[20]

20. Ibid, p. 30.

We assume that R & D, as McCleary talks about it, equates with Popp's notion of practical educational inquiry. Further, we assume the "theory based movement" to represent what Popp calls epistemic educational inquiry:

> A benefit which issues from this distinction of epistemic educational inquiry and practical educational inquiry is that one now has a basis for distinguishing theoretical significance (epistemic utility) and practical significance (practical utility) — Dewey's remark that there is nothing so practical as a good theory notwithstanding. If an experiment produces some unexpected results, researchers may claim that the study has great significance for the further directions of their work (their forming of theoretical problems and hypothesizing or posing solutions) while practitioners may rightly claim that these data mean nothing for their practices. Or the opposite is possible: a study may produce data which supports extensive reorganization of a particular school program while having little or no impact upon educational research. Of course some studies may have both types of significance and others neither.[21]

21. Ibid, p. 29.

Popp makes two points that help in understanding the relevance of both R & D and theory based research for the field. First, the educational environment mandates the need for asking both types of questions. Second, neither sort of inquiry may sensibly pursue a question devoid of a theoretical context. It is particularly important to note, despite protestations from R & D people against theory development and basic research, that intelligent practical inquiry requires some theoretical paradigm or "a way of seeing things." This does not mean theory when people say, "I have a theory about that," when they mean, "I have an idea, or an opinion, or that common sense leads to this conclusion about the reality of things." Popp means a "way of seeing things" in a rigorous, systematic, lawful, and empirical sense. He suggests that any problem of practical inquiry must meet the following conditions: 1) the clear "identification of some part of the world"; 2) a specific goal to be achieved by modifying this part of the world and a statement of what it will look like after its changed; and 3) empirical evidence that the modification can be made. It is his argument that all three requirements "presuppose some paradigmatic theory or disciplinary framework." That is, conditions 1 and 2 require "the instantiation of theoretical variables in a particular circumstance," and 3 requires at least a theoretical prediction of relationship between the part to be changed and the stated goal. This contention of the need for theory to guide practical educational inquiry would, if accepted, make the point, (assuming we take the improvement of educational practice as one purpose of the field), that both forms of inquiry are necessary. Popp's conclusion below makes clear the sense of connectedness between the two forms.

> This leads to the more general conclusion that the evaluation of a proposed solution to a practical problem presupposes the results of evaluations of proposed solutions to some theoretical problems. This will not be controversial with those who have held there is a distinction between basic and applied research; it demonstrates that in some respects basic or theoretical research is logically prior to applied research and development. If this is accurate, then the solution to the problem of paradigm choice for the educational practitioner will be one with that encountered by the educational researcher; both must choose a way of seeing phenomena with which both must deal, even though each will do so quite differently.[22]

22. Ibid, p. 35.

The question for the field is, "Can we move ahead on both practical and epistemic fronts without placing the respective efforts in political juxtaposition?" Such an apolitical environment would allow us to critically examine our inquiry efforts without engaging in "talking through each other." We would not be continuously engaged in testing the work of an individual against our view of the world, but rather for its consistency with his/her view of the world. As an example, it would be irrelevant, and we believe currently is, to dismiss competency based efforts because they do not add to theory development in educational administration. Conversely, it would be irrelevant, and we believe it is, to dismiss efforts at theory articulation as useless because they do not offer practical prescriptions. Sadly, this has been the nature of the debate which, in part, leaves the field in somnambulance. It would seem much more useful to interact on a basis of relatedness rather than one of difference.

Recommendations

In the preceding pages we have presented our analysis of the Greenfield-Griffiths debate and discussed how this disagreement symbolizes a more general condition in the field. The list below briefly summarizes the main points of our analysis.

1. The currently popular chastisement of the "theory based movement" has both political and academic dimensions.
2. Politically, several groups wish to challenge the "movement's" control over norms and criteria for legitimizing research and scholarship in the field.
3. Academically, the debate seems more a matter of "talking through" each other than seriously defining and discussing an issue.
4. The positivist view of knowledge, science, theory, etc. held by the "theory based" advocates places severe limitations on the language we use and the meaning we give to concepts.
5. These limited conceptual definitions allow principals of the "theory based movement" to dismiss their challengers as "Methodologically bad, theoretically useless and focused on trivial problems."[23]
6. These limited definitions reduce the challengers' arguments to a theoretical statement.
7. Using the work of Jerome Popp, we argue that any intelligent inquiry in the field presupposes a "theory" or "paradigm."

23. Hart, op. cit., p. 3.

Like Griffiths we "see no reason to be ashamed of having opinions." In our final comments, which follow, we offer some of ours.

Opinions

Let us first state the assumptions which guide our thinking about inquiry in the field. 1) The purpose of inquiry is to generate knowledge, 2) knowledge generation can legitimately be aimed at epistemic utility or practical utility, and 3) any inquiry which is to be useful must emanate from a "theory" or "way of seeing things."

We have previously argued that, in terms of inquiry, there exists a necessary relationship between theoretical questioning and practical questioning. We would like to suggest that a third kind of inquiry, philosophic, be added. (We make this

suggestion recognizing that positivists dating from Comte and Freud have held that philosophy was at best speculation and more often superstition, [sentiments clearly reflected in Suppes' dismissal of wisdom]). Again, the work of Popp helps to illustrate the point. He argues that "practical educational inquiry" not only depends upon "epistemic" knowledge of what can be, but also presupposes some "theory" of what should be. The point is not that philosophy and "science" aim at the same kind of theory, but at theory which meets the demands of their respective methodology.

> It should be noted that "philosophy of education" is not properly equated with "educational theory" for this makes all educational research philosophic. Neither is all educational research scientific for theoretical educational inquiry into what is desirable human development is possible, undertaken, and presupposed by practical educational inquiry.[24]

24. Popp, op. cit., p. 35.

Further, it should be noted that sensible "theories" of desirable education presuppose, as does practical educational inquiry, certain epistemic facts.

> None of these remarks is intended to suggest that the conclusions in philosophy of education can be verified (confirmed, corroborated, etc.,) as are scientific hypotheses. The point is, rather, that empirical conclusions are part of the raw materials for philosophizing about education. Any such theorizing about desirabilities will presuppose some frame of reference in terms of which empirical possibilities can be projected and philosophical beliefs about education can be further played out.[25]

25. Ibid, p. 36.

Certainly philosophic inquiry, so conceived, could assuage the suspicions of those who take the methodology to be mindless meandering without regard for reality and separate the hair-brained ideas frequently presented under the rubric of philosophy from the serious conclusions of philosophic scholarship and research.

Our second opinion is that the field should adopt an academic relativism. We mean by this an assessment of new knowledge relative to the type of inquiry it represents. This would mean a relaxation of the limited definitions set by the positivists on such concepts as knowledge, theory, and research. As an example, the rigid definition of theory proposed by Griffiths restricts legitimate work to narrowly conceived "epistemic inquiry." The current state of knowledge in the field and the need for other sorts of "theory" both argue against such a choice. We suggest that the field considers using the following four statements from Kimbrough and Nunnery[26] in order to guide its general thinking about theory.

26. Kimbrough & Nunnery, op. cit., pp. 48-49.

1. Because a theory is the creation of the theorist, there is no prescribed procedure for developing a theory. The theorist may use direct observation, the work of other theorists, the results of other research, or some combination thereof.
2. Because the postulates that make up a theory are abstract, a theory cannot be tested directly. Because a theory cannot be tested directly, it is inappropriate to speak of a theory as being true or false. It is more appropriate to speak of theory in terms of its usefulness.
3. The postulates must be internally consistent. Said another way, when viewed collectively, the elements of a theory must appear logically related and add to a consistent whole.
4. Empirical definitions are essential. Because theory leads to propositions that can be tested in the real world, there is a need to define the concepts of the theory in order that the user can have a means of moving from the abstract to the observable. Difficulties in this process are obvious; the aim should be to be as precise as the state of development permits.

Then particular theories could be more specifically evaluated relative to their function for epistemic, philosophic, or practical inquiry. "Theory serves the scholar and practitioner in at least four ways. One function of theory is taxonomic, another is explanatory, a third is predictive, and a fourth is heuristic."[27] If Greenfield, for example, could develop a "theory which deals with organizations in ideological terms" and explicate the sort of inquiry such a theory would serve, then we could assess his thinking more neutrally than the positivist conceptions will allow.

27. Ibid, p. 49.

Our case for a more relativistic attitude toward knowledge, theory, science, research, et cetera, should not be misconstrued as a call for eclecticism. We simply contend that our field must foster and sanction as legitimate modes of inquiry which exceed the limitations of positivism. This relaxation of rigid definitions in no way implies a surcease in rigor or critique. Relativistic criticism, as we conceive it, plainly means that a person's work should be assessed in terms of 1) an articulation of a presupposed "way of seeing" which meets the conditions outlined in our preceding discussion of theory; 2) a rationale which defends the chosen method of inquiry relative to the presupposed theory; and 3) an explication of the category into which the new knowledge will fit, i.e., practical, epistemic, or philosophic. Within such rules we would be able to follow Popp's rejoinder to educational critics. "The first principle of criticism requires that one be able to state the position to be criticized in such a way that those responsible advocates of that position could affirm it."[28]

28. Popp, op. cit., p. 39.

This sort of criticism requires that those who hold differing views make serious attempts to comprehend one another. Theory development, which both Greenfield and Griffiths urge, may progress in such an environment. In suggesting the developmental dysfunction of "talking through" each other, Popp concludes that "when different theorists attempt to comprehend each other, a situation for theory development is created. But such a situation depends upon having certain attitudes or dispositions, as well as certain skills or methods."[29]

29. Ibid, p. 39.

It is our opinion that first among these dispositions must be to prohibit the politicalization of substantive debate and critique. We believe stepping away from narrow prescriptions for legitimate research and scholarship would be a good beginning. We do not, however, advocate the demise of what has been called "basic" or "scientific research." We simply encourage the field to recognize the merit and necessity of other kinds of knowledge.

Oliver Gibson has proposed the establishment of a U.C.E.A. Research Commission. He suggests as an early task that such a commission could conduct "a somewhat detailed mapping of the territory including operational definitions of the territory, basic beliefs, key concepts (paradigms) and their recent shifts (within, say the present century), developers, technology, etc. The primary function of such descriptive reporting is seen as a contribution to collective consciousness within the territory."[30] If this mapping could be done in an apolitical context, we might be able to begin organizing current knowledge into sensible categories. We have offered three possible categories: 1) knowledge of what is; 2) knowledge of what is desirable; and 3) knowledge of how to practice in an immediately practical situation. We have argued that in terms of utility for the field these are not mutually exclusive, while at the same time each has independent assumptions about the nature of knowledge, methods of inquiry, and uses of knowledge. We do not know if these are appropriate categories, but we do believe they illustrate our final point. That is, if we can develop "attitudes" of political "detente" and mutual respect, we may be able to achieve greater clarity about what we know about, what is meant when we use concepts such as theory, science, knowledge, and research, and about which questions need systematic attention from the field. □

30. Gibson, Oliver. "Memorandum on UCEA Role in Research Development," September 1975, p. 5.